

News

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Bureau of Labor Statistics

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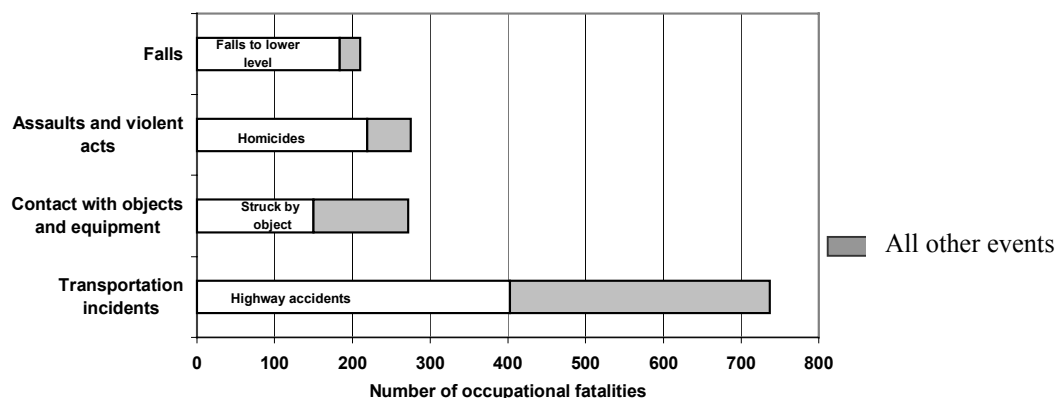
WORK-RELATED DEATHS IN THE SOUTHEAST, 2000

Work-related fatalities in the Southeast¹ totaled 1,696 in 2000, 85 fewer than recorded in 1999, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that the number of fatalities resulting from highway crashes and being struck by an object were the largest contributors to the decline. Deaths resulting from fires and explosions were also down in 2000. Fatalities from electrocutions and workplace homicides, on the other hand, recorded an increase. The total number of work-related fatalities in the Southeast accounted for about 29 percent of the 6,053 casualties occurring nationwide. Nationally, fatal work injuries were down 139 over the year, with the number due to highway crashes also leading the decline. (See table 1.)

Profile of calendar year 2000 fatal work injuries in the Southeast

As they did for the nation, highway crashes made up the largest portion of job-related fatalities (403) in the Southeast in 2000, accounting for almost 24 percent of all fatal work injuries. Worksite homicides (219), showing a slight increase over the year, made up 13 percent of the total. Deaths resulting from a fall to a lower level (184) accounted for almost 11 percent of the fatal work injury count. All together, these three events accounted for nearly half of all fatal workplace injuries in the Southeast, about the same as for the nation as a whole. (See table 1 and chart below.)

Chart 1. Leading causes of fatal workplace injuries in the Southeast, 1999-2000



¹ The 2000 Southeast CFOI release has been expanded to include all of the South Atlantic Census Division (Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia) and the East South Central Census Division (Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee.).

Two other events resulted in more than 50 deaths in the Southeast. Being struck by an object accounted for 150 deaths or almost nine percent of the total. Ninety-seven workers died after having been electrocuted.

State and metropolitan highlights

In the Southeast, the largest number of fatal work injuries occurred in Florida (329), followed by North Carolina (234) and Georgia (195). These three states also have the largest workforces in the region. Conversely, the states with smaller workforces recorded fewer on-the-job fatal injuries. These included the District of Columbia (8) and Delaware (4). The largest drop in fatal work injuries occurred in Georgia, down 34 over the year, followed by South Carolina, down 25 and Alabama, down 20. Deaths from work injuries were up by 12 in two states, Kentucky and North Carolina, and by 6 in Tennessee. Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Mississippi recorded very little change in their fatal injury count over the year. Since 1996, two states, Alabama and West Virginia, have had a 30 percent reduction or more in the number of fatalities from work-related injuries. (See table 2.)

Causes of fatal work-related injuries varied across the 13 states. Highway crashes accounted for 39 percent of all on-the-job fatalities in South Carolina but 17 percent in North Carolina. In the District of Columbia, 54 percent of workplace deaths were due to homicides, in Alabama, just 8 percent. And falling to a lower level led to 21 percent of work related deaths in Maryland, while South Carolina attributed only 7 percent to this event. (See table 3.)

Fatal workplace injury data are also available for four metropolitan areas in the Southeast in 2000 -- Atlanta, Georgia; Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Florida; and Washington-Baltimore, District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia-West Virginia. Of the four, the Washington-Baltimore area had the highest number of on-the-job deaths at 122, while the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater area recorded the fewest at 50. In the Tampa area, highway crashes accounted for the largest share of workplace fatalities, while homicides made up the largest percentage in the Atlanta and Miami-Fort Lauderdale areas. (See tables 4 and 5.)

Background of the program

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, part of the BLS occupational safety and health statistics program, provides the most complete count of fatal work injuries available. The program uses diverse state and federal data sources to identify, verify, and profile fatal work injuries. Information about each workplace fatality (occupation and other worker characteristics, equipment being used, and circumstances of the event) is obtained by cross-referencing source documents, such as death certificates, workers' compensation records, and reports to federal and state agencies. This method assures counts are as complete and accurate as possible.

This is the ninth year that the fatality census has been conducted in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The BLS fatality census is a federal/state cooperative venture in which costs are shared equally. Additional state-specific data are available from the participating state agencies listed below. Another BLS program, the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses, profiles worker and case characteristics of nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses that result in lost worktime and presents frequency counts and incidence rates by industry. Copies of the 1999 news release on nonfatal injuries and illnesses are available from BLS by calling (215) 597-3282 or by accessing the website listed below. Incidence rates for 2000 by industry will be published in December 2001, and information on 2000 worker and case characteristics will be available in April 2002. For additional data, access the BLS Internet site:
<http://www.bls.gov/iif/home.htm>

To request a copy of BLS Report 954 which includes several articles and highlights 1998 and 1999 fatality data, e-mail your address to BLSinfoPhiladelphia@bls.gov or write to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Suite 610 East – The Curtis Center, 170 S. Independence Mall West, Philadelphia, PA 19106-3305.

TECHNICAL NOTES

Definitions

For a fatality to be included in the census, the decedent must have been employed (that is working for pay, compensation, or profit) at the time of the event, engaged in a legal work activity, or present at the site of the incident as a requirement of his or her job. These criteria are generally broader than those used by federal and state agencies administering specific laws and regulations. (Fatalities that occur during a person's commute to or from work are excluded from the census counts.)

Data presented in this release include deaths occurring in 2000 that resulted from traumatic occupational injuries. An injury is defined as any intentional or unintentional wound or damage to the body resulting from acute exposure to energy, such as heat, electricity, or kinetic energy from a crash, or from the absence of such essentials as heat or oxygen caused by a specific event, incident, or series of events within a single workday or shift. Included are open wounds, intracranial and internal injuries, heatstroke, hypothermia, asphyxiation, acute poisonings resulting from short-term exposures limited to the worker's shift, suicides and homicides, and work injuries listed as underlying or contributory causes of death.

Information on work-related fatal illnesses is not reported in the BLS census and is excluded from the attached tables because the latency period of many occupational illnesses and the difficulty of linking illnesses to work make identification of a universe problematic.

Measurement techniques and limitations

Data for the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries are compiled from various federal, state, and local administrative sources—including death certificates, workers' compensation reports and claims, reports to various regulatory agencies, medical examiner reports, and police reports—as well as news and other non-governmental reports. Diverse sources are used because studies have shown that no single source captures all job-related fatalities. Source documents are matched so that each fatality is counted only once. To ensure that a fatality occurred while the decedent was at work, information is verified from two or more independent source documents or from a source document and a follow-up questionnaire. Approximately 30 data elements are collected, coded, and tabulated, including information about the worker, the fatal incident, and the machinery or equipment involved.

Identification and verification of work-related fatalities.

In 2000, there were 147 cases included for which work relationship could not be independently verified; however, the information on the initiating source document for these cases was sufficient to determine that the incident was likely to be job related. Data for these fatalities, which primarily affected self-employed workers, are included in the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries counts. An additional 20 fatalities submitted by states were not included because the initiating source document had insufficient information to determine work relationship and could not be verified by either an independent source document or a follow-up questionnaire.

TECHNICAL NOTES (continued)

States may identify additional fatal work injuries after data collection closeout for a reference year. In addition, other fatalities excluded from the published count because of insufficient information to determine work relationship may subsequently be verified as work related. States have up to one year to update their initial published state counts. This procedure ensures that fatality data are disseminated as quickly as possible and that no legitimate case is excluded from the counts. Thus, each year's report should be considered preliminary until the next year's data are issued. Increases in the published counts based on additional information have averaged less than 100 fatalities per year or less than 1.5 percent of the total. The BLS national news release issued August 17, 2000, reported a total of 6,023 fatal work injuries for 1999. Since then, an additional 31 fatal work injuries were identified, bringing the total for 1999 to 6,054.

Federal/state agency coverage

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries includes data for all fatal work injuries, whether they are covered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or other federal or state agencies or are outside the scope of regulatory coverage. Thus, any comparison between the BLS fatality census counts and those released by other agencies should take into account the different coverage requirements and definitions being used.

Several federal and state agencies have jurisdiction over workplace safety and health. OSHA and affiliated agencies in states with approved safety programs cover the largest portion of the nation's workers. However, injuries and illnesses occurring in certain industries or activities, such as coal, metal, and nonmetal mining and highway, water, rail, and air transportation, are excluded from OSHA coverage because they are covered by other federal agencies, such as the Mine Safety and Health Administration and various agencies within the Department of Transportation. Fatalities occurring in activities regulated by federal agencies other than OSHA accounted for about 15 percent of the fatal work injuries in 2000.

Fatalities occurring among several other groups of workers are generally not covered by any federal or state agencies. These groups include self-employed and unpaid family workers, which accounted for about 20 percent of the fatalities; laborers on small farms, accounting for about 1 percent of the fatalities; and state and local government employees in states without OSHA-approved safety programs, which accounted for about 4 percent. (Approximately one-half of the states have approved OSHA safety programs, which cover state and local government employees.)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: BLS thanks the participating states for their efforts in collecting accurate, comprehensive, and useful data on fatal work injuries. BLS also appreciates the efforts of all federal, state, local, and private sector agencies that submitted source documents used to identify fatal work injuries. Among these agencies are the Occupational Safety and Health Administration; the National Transportation Safety Board; the U.S. Coast Guard; the Mine Safety and Health Administration; the Employment Standards Administration (Federal Employees' Compensation and Longshore and Harbor Workers' divisions); the

Department of Energy; state vital statistics registrars, coroners, and medical examiners; state departments of health, labor and industries, and workers' compensation agencies; state and local police departments; and state farm bureaus.

CFOI participating state agencies and telephone numbers

State	Agency	Telephone number
Alabama	Department of Labor	(334) 242-3460
Alaska	Department of Labor and Workforce Development	(907) 465-4539
Arizona	Industrial Commission of Arizona	(602) 542-3739
Arkansas	Department of Labor	(501) 682-4542
California	Department of Industrial Relations	(415) 703-4776
Colorado	Department of Public Health	(303) 692-2173
Connecticut	Labor Department	(860) 566-4380
Delaware	Department of Labor	(302) 761-8223
District of Columbia	Center for Health Statistics	(202) 442-5920
Florida	Department of Labor and Employment Security	(850) 922-8953
Georgia	Department of Labor	(404) 679-0687
Hawaii	Department of Labor and Industrial Relations	(808) 586-9001
Idaho	Industrial Commission	(208) 334-6090
Illinois	Department of Public Health	(217) 782-5750
Indiana	Department of Labor	(317) 232-2668
Iowa	Division of Labor Services	(515) 281-5151
Kansas	Department of Health and Environment	(785) 296-1058
Kentucky	Labor Cabinet	(502) 564-3070
Louisiana	Department of Labor	(225) 342-3126
Maine	Bureau of Labor Standards	(207) 624-6440
Maryland	Division of Labor and Industry	(410) 767-2356
Massachusetts	Department of Public Health	(617) 624-5627
Michigan	Department of Consumer and Industry Services	(517) 322-5258
Minnesota	Department of Labor and Industry	(651) 284-5568
Mississippi	Department of Health	(601) 576-7186
Missouri	Department of Health	(573) 751-6155
Montana	Department of Labor and Industry	(406) 444-3297
Nebraska	Workers' Compensation Court	(402) 471-3547
Nevada	Division of Industrial Relations	(775) 684-7082
New Hampshire	Department of Public Health	(603) 271-4647
New Jersey	Department of Health and Senior Services	(609) 984-1863
New Mexico	Occupational Health and Safety Bureau	(505) 827-4230
New York State	Department of Health	(518) 402-7900
New York City	Department of Health	(212) 788-4585
North Carolina	Department of Labor	(919) 733-0337
North Dakota	Bureau of Labor Statistics	(312) 353-7200
Ohio	Department of Health	(614) 466-4183
Oklahoma	Department of Labor	(405) 528-1500
Oregon	Department of Consumer and Business Services	(503) 947-7051
Pennsylvania	Department of Health	(717) 783-2548
Rhode Island	Department of Health	(401) 222-2812
South Carolina	Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation	(803) 734-4298
South Dakota	Bureau of Labor Statistics	(312) 353-7200
Tennessee	Department of Labor and Workforce Development	(615) 741-1749
Texas	Workers' Compensation Commission	(512) 804-4651
Utah	Labor Commission	(801) 530-6823
Vermont	Department of Labor and Industry	(802) 828-5076
Virginia	Department of Labor and Industry	(804) 786-6427
Washington	Department of Labor and Industries	(360) 902-5510
West Virginia	Department of Labor	(304) 558-7890
Wisconsin	Department of Workforce Development	(608) 266-7850
Wyoming	Bureau of Labor Statistics	(816) 426-2483

Table 1. Number of fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure in the United States and the Southeast, 1999-2000

Event (1)	Fatalities					
	United States			Southeast		
	Over the year change			Over the year change		
	1999	2000	Over the year change	1999	2000	Over the year change
Total	6,054	5,915	-139	1,781	1,696	-85
Transportation incidents						
Highway	2,618	2,571	-47	778	737	-41
	1,496	1,363	-133	450	403	-47
Assaults and violent acts						
Homicides	909	929	20	282	275	-7
	651	677	26	214	219	5
Contact with objects and equipment						
Struck by object	1,030	1,005	-25	280	272	-8
	585	570	-15	174	150	-24
Falls						
Fall to lower level	721	734	13	207	210	3
	634	659	25	185	184	-1
Exposure to harmful substances or environment						
Contact with electrical current	533	480	-53	162	145	-17
	280	256	-24	83	97	14
Fires and explosions						
	216	177	-39	51	43	-8
Other events						
	27	19	-8	10	-	-

1/ Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Structures.

Table 2. Fatal occupational injuries for the United States and states in the Southeast, 1996-2000

State	Year					1996-2000 average
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	
United States	6,202	6,238	6,055	6,054	5,915	6,093
Southeast	1,735	1,844	1,776	1,781	1,696	1,766
Alabama	155	139	135	123	103	131
Delaware	18	17	11	14	13	15
District of Columbia	19	23	13	14	13	16
Florida	333	366	384	345	329	351
Georgia	213	242	202	229	195	216
Kentucky	141	143	117	120	132	131
Maryland	82	82	78	82	84	82
Mississippi	103	104	113	128	125	115
North Carolina	191	210	228	222	234	217
South Carolina	109	131	111	139	114	121
Tennessee	152	168	150	154	160	157
Virginia	153	166	177	154	148	160
West Virginia	66	53	57	57	46	56

Table 3. Fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in the United States and the Southeast, 2000

Event (1)	Fatalities													
	United States		Alabama		Delaware		District of Columbia		Florida		Georgia		Kentucky	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	5,915	100	103	100	13	100	13	100	329	100	195	100	132	100
Transportation incidents	2,571	43	58	56	3	23	-	-	135	41	88	45	65	49
Highway	1,363	23	31	30	-	-	-	-	72	22	50	26	26	20
Nonhighway (farm, industrial premises)	399	7	10	10	-	-	-	-	22	7	12	6	21	16
Aircraft	280	5	5	5	-	-	-	-	14	4	8	4	11	8
Worker struck by vehicle, mobile equipment	370	6	12	12	-	-	-	-	22	7	15	8	-	-
All other	159	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2	-	-	-	-
Assaults and violent acts	929	16	11	11	4	31	8	62	65	20	30	15	13	10
Homicides	677	11	8	8	-	-	7	54	52	16	27	14	8	6
Contact with objects and equipment	1,005	17	13	13	-	-	-	-	43	13	28	14	27	20
Struck by object	570	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	8	16	8	16	12
Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects	294	5	7	7	-	-	-	-	12	4	9	5	7	5
Caught in or crushed in collapsing materials	123	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2	-	-	-	-
Falls	734	12	12	12	3	23	3	23	51	16	25	13	13	10
Fall to lower level	659	11	10	10	-	-	-	-	42	13	21	11	12	9
Exposure to harmful substances or environment	480	8	8	8	-	-	-	-	27	8	17	9	10	8
Contact with electrical current	256	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	5	9	5	-	-
All other	224	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	3	8	4	-	-
Fires and explosions	177	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	2	6	3	4	3

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in the United States and the Southeast, 2000 (Continued)

Events (1)	Fatalities													
	Maryland		Mississippi		North Carolina		South Carolina		Tennessee		Virginia		West Virginia	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	84	100	125	100	234	100	114	100	160	100	148	100	46	100
Transportation incidents	28	33	63	50	101	43	54	47	71	44	48	32	23	50
Highway	19	23	41	33	39	17	44	39	40	25	26	18	12	26
Nonhighway (farm, industrial premises)	-	-	-	-	27	12	-	-	14	9	11	7	5	11
Aircraft	-	-	-	-	7	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Worker struck by vehicle, mobile equipment	-	-	6	5	21	9	5	4	11	7	6	4	-	-
All other	-	-	6	5	7	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assaults and violent acts	16	19	18	14	39	17	16	14	24	15	26	18	5	11
Homicides	14	17	15	12	35	15	15	13	19	12	14	9	5	11
Contact with objects and equipment	14	17	24	19	40	17	21	18	31	19	22	15	9	20
Struck by object	-	-	13	10	23	10	12	11	23	14	10	7	-	-
Caught in or compressed by equipment or object	6	7	5	4	14	6	7	6	5	3	8	5	-	-
Caught in or crushed in collapsing material	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Falls	18	21	5	4	30	13	8	7	17	11	22	15	3	7
Fall to lower level	18	21	-	-	27	12	8	7	17	11	20	14	-	-
Exposure to harmful substances or environment	7	8	11	9	18	8	9	8	16	10	18	12	4	9
Contact with electrical current	5	6	7	6	9	4	7	6	10	6	13	9	-	-
All other	-	-	-	-	9	4	-	-	6	4	5	3	-	-
Fires and explosions	-	-	4	3	5	2	5	4	-	-	12	8	-	-

(1) Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Structures.

NOTE: Totals may include categories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding.

Dashes indicate less than 0.5 percent or data that are not available or that do not meet publication criteria.

Table 4. Fatal occupational injuries in selected metropolitan areas by selected industry sector, 2000

Metropolitan area	Total fatalities (number)	Industry sector (percent) (1)		
		Total	Goods producing	Service producing
Atlanta, Ga	89	100	38	47
Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Fla	70	100	27	53
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Fla	50	100	32	56
Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV	122	100	44	48

1/ Percentage may not add to totals due to data that are not available or do not meet publication criteria.

Table 5. Fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in selected metropolitan areas, 2000

Event	Fatalities, in percent			
	Atlanta Georgia	Miami- Fort Lauderdale, Florida	Tampa- St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Florida	Washington- Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Transportation incidents				
Highway	37	27	38	28
	17	10	24	19
Assaults and violent acts				
Homicides	21	30	22	21
	19	24	16	18
Contact with objects and equipment				
Falls	17	14	14	15
	16	19	19	23
Exposure to harmful substances or environment				
Fires and explosions	7	9	9	9
	-	-	-	4

NOTE: Totals may include categories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding.
Dashes indicate less than 0.5 percent or data that are not available or that do not meet publication criteria.